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Working Group on Contemporary
Forms of Slavery
Seventeenth session
4-13 May 1992
Item 5 of the agenda

REVIEW OF DEVELOPMENTS IN OTHER FIELDS OF CONTEMPORARY FORMS OF SLAVERY

Information submitted by the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL)

Note by the Secretary-General

INTERPOL

[Original: French]
[6 May 1992]

1. The General Secretariat of the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), by circular letter dated 16 January 1992, requested its National Central Bureaux as usual to report on any cases of slavery or similar practices which had come to their notice during 1991.

2. As at 29 April 1992, the General Secretariat had received replies from the following 61 countries and territories:

Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Anguilla (United Kingdom), Argentina, Aruba, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Bahrain, Barbados, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, Colombia, Cyprus, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Djibouti, Finland, Germany, Guatemala, Hong Kong (United Kingdom), Iceland, India, Iraq,

Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Macao (Portugal), Malawi, Malta, Mauritania, Netherlands, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Poland, Portugal, Puerto Rico (United States of America), Qatar, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Seychelles, Singapore, Spain, Swaziland, Sweden, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Venezuela and Zambia.

3. Of the 61 countries mentioned above, 59 reported that the police had not recorded any cases of slavery or similar practices during 1991. Cases similar to slavery had been brought to the attention of the police in only two countries, namely Spain and Italy.

4. The National Central Bureau of Spain reported that the Spanish police had learned of a case which was similar to what might be considered serfdom, in accordance with the definition established by the United Nations. This case concerned the working conditions of a female foreign domestic employed by a diplomatic representative posted to Madrid.

5. The Italian police recorded a case of minors being reduced to slavery in 1991. The case involved "nomads" from a neighbouring country who were "suspected of criminal conspiracy for the purposes of, inter alia, inducing minors to commit offences and reducing them to slavery, to the detriment of 43 children of the same nationality".

6. Three countries or territories, namely, Hong Kong (United Kingdom), Pakistan and Puerto Rico (United States of America), while replying in the negative to the question of whether institutions such as slavery, bondage or the slave trade existed in their countries, supplied some information concerning their national laws in that field.

7. The Hong Kong authorities confirmed that the bill, designed to incorporate into the territory's internal law some of the provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, including article 8 relative to the protection against slavery and servitude, had been adopted by the Legislative Council and had entered into force on 8 June 1991.

8. Pakistan reported that article 11, chapter 1 of its Constitution prohibited slavery, all forms of forced labour and employment of children under 14 years of age in factories or mines.

9. According to the reply provided by Puerto Rico, all forms of slavery and involuntary servitude are prohibited under article II, section 12 of the Bill of Rights and by article 2 of the Constitution of 1917.